

Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions of existence; by transporting hither a large army of foreign mercenaries, to complete the work of death, desolation, and tyranny, then already begun, with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy, unworthy the head of a civilized nation; by answering our repeated petitions for redress with a repetition of injuries; and finally, by abandoning the helm of government, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection, by which several acts of misrule, the government of this country as before exercised under the crown of Great Britain, was totally dissolved: did, therefore, having maturely considered the premises, and viewing with great concern the deplorable condition to which this once happy country would be reduced, unless some regular adequate mode of civil polity should be speedily adopted, and in compliance with the recommendation of the general congress, ordain and declare a form of government of Virginia:

And whereas, a convention held on the first Monday in October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine, did propose to the people of the commonwealth an amended constitution or form of government, which was ratified by them:

And whereas, the general assembly of Virginia, by an act passed on the fourth of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty, did provide for the election, by the people, of delegates to meet in general convention, to consider, discuss, and propose a new constitution, or alterations and amendments to the existing constitution of this commonwealth; and by an act, passed on the thirteenth of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, did further provide for submitting the same to the people for ratification or rejection:

We, therefore, the delegates of the good people of Virginia, elected and in convention assembled, in pursuance of said acts, do propose to the people the following constitution and form of government for this commonwealth:

ARTICLE I.—*Bill of Rights.*

The declaration of rights, as amended and prefixed to this constitution, shall have the same relation thereto as it had to the former constitution.

ARTICLE II.—*Division of Powers.*

The legislative, executive, and judiciary departments shall be separate and distinct, so that neither exercise the powers properly belonging to either of the others; nor shall any person exercise the powers of more than one of them at the same time, except that justices of the peace shall be eligible to either house of assembly.

ARTICLE III.—*Qualification of Voters.*

1. Every white male citizen of the commonwealth, of the age of twenty-one years, who has been a resident of the state for two years, and of the county, city, or town where he offers to vote for twelve months next preceding an election, and no other person, shall be